



Docket 83304BF-P
Customer No. 01333

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

In re Application of

Lou Chauvin, et al

SYSTEM, METHOD AND SOFTWARE
PRODUCT FOR ALLOWING A
CONSUMER TO ORDER IMAGE
PRODUCTS OVER A
COMMUNICATION NETWORK FROM
A PLURALITY OF DIFFERENT
PROVIDERS

Serial No. 09/944,549

Filed August 31, 2001

Mail Stop APPEAL BRIEF-PATENTS

Commissioner for Patents

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, VA. 22313-1450

Sir:

APPEAL BRIEF TRANSMITTAL

Enclosed herewith is Appellants' Appeal Brief for the above-identified application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the Appeal Brief filing fee to Eastman Kodak Company Deposit Account 05-0225. A duplicate copy of this letter is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures

If the Examiner is unable to reach the Applicant(s) Attorney at the telephone number provided, the Examiner is requested to communicate with Eastman Kodak Company Patent Operations at (585) 477-4656.



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APPEAL BRIEF PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. 41.37 and 35 U.S.C. 134

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APPELLANT'S BRIEF ON APPEAL

Appellants hereby appeal to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences from the Examiner's Final Rejection of claims 1-22 which was contained in the Office Action mailed March 1, 2005.

A timely Notice of Appeal was mailed on May 31, 2005.

Real Party In Interest

As indicated above in the caption of the Brief, the Eastman Kodak Company is the real party in interest.

Related Appeals And Interferences

No appeals or interferences are known which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

Status Of The Claims

Claims 1-22 are pending in the application. These claims have been rejected and are being appealed.

Appendix I provides a clean, double spaced copy of the claims on appeal.

Status Of Amendments

The claims stand as indicated in Appendix I.

Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The present invention is directed to a method, system and software product for the selecting of a digital photographic service provider from a plurality of different service providers for providing a selection of photographic services with respect to a digital image over a communication network. The invention includes providing a service directory on a server that is accessible over a communication network. A user of the system enters a criterion with respect to desired services to the server over the communication network. The server in response thereto provides a list of the service providers that meets the user criterion. The user then selects from the list of different service providers and submits a request for a desired service by the selected service provider which in turn provides the desired

goods or service. The present invention allows a customer that has access to a plurality of unrelated service providers for a greater variety of goods and services.

Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The following issues are presented for review by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences:

1. Whether claims 1-5, 10, 11, 13 and 17-22 are obvious under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,324,521 to Shiota in view of U.S. Patent Application 2003/0005132 A1 to Nguyen.

2. Whether claims 6-9 are obvious under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Nguyen and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,918,054 to Jury.

3. Whether claims 12 and 16 are obvious under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Nguyen and further in view of U.S. Patent Application 2002/0036696 to Takemoto.

4. Whether claims 14 and 16 are obvious under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Nguyen and further in view of Examiner's Official Notice.

Arguments

A. Background

Today, the ordering of image products, good and/or services are limited to the goods or services provided by a single provider. These are typically closed systems where the user accesses a single service provider over the Internet and orders from the limited list of goods or services offered by that provider. Quite often a particular service provider is not able to provide a whole variety of different goods or services due to its limited capabilities and business directions. The user must then search for a suitable provider. The present invention seeks to solve the problems of the prior art by providing a directory service layer that provides a list of service providers where service providers can publish their services, definitions, capabilities and locations and allow a user a greater selection of services in an efficient manner. Given a set of services available through the

directory service layer, users are able to find an appropriate service provider by providing a criterion as to the particular types of goods or services it wishes to obtain. The directory service layer provides a list of potential service providers to the users from which the user may select a particular service provider. Thus, the user is no longer limited to a particular service provider when desiring a particular type of goods or services. In addition, a larger variety of different goods or services can be quickly obtained and accessed even with respect to different competing providers.

B. The rejection of claims 1-5, 10, 11, 13 and 17-22 over Shiota in view of Nguyen

Claims 1, 20, 21, and 22 are independent claims wherein claims 2-19 depend at least ultimately upon independent claim 1.

Independent claims 1, 20 and 21 are directed to method, system and software products for allowing the selection of a digital photographic service provider from a plurality of different service providers and providing a photographic image service.

The independent claims are directed to a method, system or software for selecting a digital photographic service provider from a plurality of different service providers and providing a photographic image service with respect to at least one digital image located at a user location remote of said selected photo service provider. The invention includes providing a service directory on a server accessible over a communication network which includes an entry for a plurality of different unrelated service providers. The claims further include providing a criterion to the server with respect to a selection of a service provider and automatically providing the user with a list of one or more plurality of unrelated different service providers based on said criterion for display on the user display device. The claims include the step wherein the user selects one of the plurality of different service providers on the provided list and the steps directed to a particular service by the user and then providing of the service by the service provider.

The claimed invention can be distinguished from primary cited reference to Shiota by at least the following points:

- 1) the user provides a criterion to the service provider with respect to providing a selection of a service provider;
- 2) that a list of providers is provided to the user based on the criterion provided by the user; and
- 3) that the list comprises one or more unrelated different service providers.

The Examiner suggests that in Shiota, the user provides criterion for the selection of a service provider and in particular refers to column 2, lines 29-33. This portion of the Shiota is directed to the placement of an order by placing input information into a predetermined screen. This does not teach or suggest that the user provide a criterion to the service directory for obtaining a list of different service providers. Quite the contrary, this portion is already dealing with the placement of an order.

The Examiner refers to column 3, lines 5-10 for the providing of a service directory. The passage referred to by the Examiner in column 3, lines 5-10 is directed to the selection by the service provider of where the order is to be fulfilled. This portion of the Shiota reference is dealing with the service center selecting the appropriate laboratory based upon the appropriate equipment to provide the desired product that has been ordered. While Shiota discloses that the customer may select the laboratory that is to output the print, there is no teaching or suggestion that this is based on any criterion supplied by the user. As set forth in column 6, lines 21-22, Shiota discusses the fact that there is provided a number of affiliated laboratories. This affiliation indicates that the selection by the user is based on an already existing affiliation. There is nothing that indicates that the output list is provided in response to a criterion supplied by the user as claimed by applicants. The service providers are not unrelated as also taught and claimed by applicant. Applicant further directs the Examiner to column 9, lines 16-25, that when the customer wishes to receive the print over the counter, the order information data shows the laboratory at which the print is received is referred to, and the laboratory is selected as the laboratory to output the print. As further set forth, when no laboratory is specified in the order information, the laboratory which stores the high resolution image is selected. (See column 9,

lines 21-22 of Shiota). As previously stated, there is no teaching or suggestion of developing a list of service providers based on a criterion provided by the user.

The Examiner states that Shiota fails to disclose the use of a service directory and cites Nguyen. Applicant respectfully submits that the Nguyen reference does not teach or suggest anything in combination with Shiota that would render applicants invention obvious. In this regard, applicant would first like to state that in order to properly combine references there must be some teaching suggestion or motivation to combine the references. The CAFC in *In re Lee*, 16 USPQ2d, 1430, at page 1433 has stated:

“When patentability turns on the question of obviousness, the search for and analysis of the prior art includes evidence relevant to the finding of whether there is a teaching, motivation, or suggestion to select and combine the references relied on as evidence of obviousness.”... “The factual inquiry whether to combine references must be thorough and searching”... It must be based on the objective evidence of record.”... (“Our case law makes clear that the best defense against the subtle but powerful attraction of a hindsight-based obviousness analysis is rigorous application of the requirement for showing of the teaching or motivation to combine prior art references.”... “(there must be some motivation, suggestion, or teaching of the desirability of making the specific combination that was made by the applicant).”

In this regard the distributed service creation and distribution system of Nguyen is totally apart and distinct from the Shiota reference. The Shiota reference is directed to a network photographic service of affiliated laboratories with a central center server for fulfilling an order that a customer placed over the network. This is in contrast to the distributed service creation and distributions of Nguyen where there is provided a directory service utility that maintains a registry of service providers. As set forth at paragraph 35 of Nguyen, there is provided a directory service utility that is aware of other service communities. There is provided a hierarchical relationship among service clusters 108A that communicate between directory service utilities 316. As set forth in paragraph 39 of Nguyen, the cluster 108 of service communities 212 may be built in a scalable way. Each service community 212 in the cluster 108

comprises a set of local service providers 314 and a directory service utility 316 to periodically publish information about those service providers 314 within the service communities 212 using a proposed service information propagation method.

Paragraphs 46 and 47 briefly describe how the Nguyen system works. In particular, an inquiry is sent to the local directory service utility 316 requesting a particular service. If the requested service is available locally, a response is sent advising the address of a local service provider to the requestor. If not, available locally, the local service directory 316 sends a propagated inquiry to a remote directory service utility and this is propagated until a suitable provider is found.

As set forth in paragraph 71 of Nguyen, when more than one service provider is found, one service provider is selected and the address of the selected service provider is sent to the source of the query (step 1006), see Fig. 10. Thus, it is clear that the Nguyen reference is not directed to providing a list of service providers but to locating a particular service provider and sending that information to the individual that made the query. The Nguyen reference is directed to a hierarchical searching system for locating a service provider whereas the Shiota reference is directed to a close type ordering system. There is no teaching, suggestion or motivation to combine the cited references. Further, the Nguyen reference fails to teach or suggest the providing of a list of service providers in response to the criterion provided by the user as claimed by applicants. In fact, Nguyen teaches away from such as in the case of where one or more service provider is located, only a single individual provider is sent to the requestor.

In view of the foregoing it is respectfully submitted that the prior art fails to teach or suggest the invention as set forth in independent claim 1. Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentably distinct over the cited references.

With regard to claims 20 and 21, these are independent claims that are directed to a system and software product which includes similar limitations set forth in independent claim 1 as previously discussed and are therefore are patentably distinct for the same reasons previously discussed.

Independent claim 22 is slightly different than independent claim 21 in that independent claim 22 is directed to a method of linking a digital photographic image service requestor to a service provider and includes substantially the same limitations set forth in claim 1 and therefore is patentably distinct for the same reasons.

The remaining claims depend at least ultimately upon independent claim 1 and therefore are patentably distinct for the same reasons. The additional references cited by the Examiner against these dependent claims do not detract from the patentability of the independent claims. Accordingly it is believed that the dependent claims are patentably distinct over the cited prior art.

Summary

In summary, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is patentably distinct over the cited art.

Conclusion

For the above reasons, Appellants respectfully request that the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences reverse the rejection by the Examiner and mandate the allowance of Claims 1-22.

Respectfully submitted,



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Appendix I - Claims on Appeal

1. A method of selecting a digital photographic service provider from a plurality of different service providers and providing a photographic image service with respect to at least one digital image located at a user location remote from said selected photographic service provider, comprising:

- a) providing a services directory on a server accessible over a communication network which includes entries for a plurality of different unrelated service providers;
- b) said user providing a criterion to said server over said communication network for selection of a service provider;
- c) automatically providing the user with a list of one or more of said plurality of unrelated different service providers based on said criterion for display on a user display device;
- d) said user selecting one of said plurality of different service providers from said list;
- e) providing a request for a desired service by said user to the selected service provider; and
- f) providing of said desired service by said selected service provider.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the criterion comprises a location of a designated recipient.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the criterion is selected from at least one of the following:

- Brand of image capture device
- Language
- Retailer
- Cost of service
- Specific Product characteristics
- Delivery time
- Delivery method
- Delivery reach
- Specific provider characteristics
- Access time
- Ability to ship to specific location.

4. The method according to claim 1 wherein said automatically providing of said list is accomplished through the use of a locator service.

5. The method according to claim 1 wherein said list includes service information for each of the service providers.

6. The method according to claim 1 further including the step of providing an icon for the selected service provider.

7. The method according to claim 6 wherein the icon for the selected service provider is displayed in a user interface screen.

8. The method according to claim 7 wherein the icon for the selected service provider is displayed in place of a generic icon.

9. The method according to claim 7 wherein the icon for the selected service provider comprises a trademark.

10. The method according to claim 1 wherein said requester selecting one of said plurality of different service providers from said list further comprises displaying a list of service providers and service information for at least one of the listed service providers.

11. The method according to claim 1 wherein said criterion is directly associated with data included in the digital image file.

12. A method according to claim 11 wherein said data includes a camera manufacturer of a digital camera that captured said selected one of said plurality of digital images.

13. A method according to claim 1 wherein the service provider is positioned on said display device according to a business criteria.

14. A method according to claim 13 wherein said business criteria is based on a retailer who sold the digital camera that captured said selected one of said plurality of digital images.

15. A method according to claim 13 wherein said business criteria is based on a digital camera make.

16. A method according to claim 13 wherein said business criteria is based on a language selected by the user.

17. A method according to claim 1 further wherein said selected one of said plurality digital images was captured by a digital camera.

18. A method according to claim 17 wherein the selected service is producing hardcopy prints of the selected images.

19. A method according to claim 18 further including the step of selecting a print quantity for the selected images.

20. A system for providing imaging services over a communications network, including:

a) a first device having a user interface for receiving commands from a user and a network interface;

b) a plurality of unrelated different service providers connected to said communication network;

c) a computer having a network interface for communication to said first device over said communication network, wherein said computer having a services directory having entries for a plurality of unrelated different service providers, each of said plurality of different service providers having associated information;

d) wherein the user, using said first device, provides at least one criterion;

e) said computer automatically provides a list of at least one of said plurality of different service providers based on the criterion, using said associated information;

f) said selected service provider providing said requested service.

21. A computer software product for linking a digital camera user to a service provider selected from a plurality of service providers, said computer software program will when loaded on to a computer will cause the computer to do the following steps:

a) providing a services directory that is accessible over a communication network which includes entries for a plurality of unrelated service providers;

b) communicating at least one criterion from the digital camera user over a communication network to said service directory;

- c) automatically providing the digital camera user with a list of one or more of said plurality of different service providers based on the criterion;
- d) said digital camera user selecting one of said plurality of different service providers from said list over said communication network;
- e) providing a request for a desired service to the selected service provider over said communication network; and
- f) providing of said desired service by said selected service provider.

22. A method of linking a digital photographic imaging service requester to a service provider selected from a plurality of different unrelated service providers that are registered in a member system, comprising:

- a) providing a services directory that is accessible over a communication network which includes entries for a plurality of services, each service associated with at least one of said plurality of different service providers;
- b) the service requester providing at least one digital image and at least one criterion over said communication network;
- c) automatically providing the requester over said communication network with a list of one or more of said plurality of different service providers based on said criterion;
- d) said requester selecting over said communication network one of said plurality of different service providers from said list;

e) providing a request for a desired service and providing said digital image to the selected service provider over said communication network;

and

f) providing of said desired service by said selected service provider.